Intermodal Data Project

Background

The Washington State DOT, through it's Advanced Technology Branch, has received funding from the USDOT to apply Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology to intermodal freight movements. This project will link public highway-oriented ITS with private freight-oriented Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems. These linkages are designed to decrease operating costs and reduce congestion by permitting freight organizations to identify and bypass transportation bottlenecks. The project involves the Washington State Transportation Center (TRAC), Puget Sound Regional Council, the ports of Tacoma and Seattle, Sea-Land, federal enforcement agencies, a private company that manufactures electronic tags, and the Washington Trucking Association. The total project budget is $700,000, with $300,000 in federal funds, a $300,000 state match, and the rest in salaries and donated equipment.

Project Plan and Status

Three tests will be developed and evaluated as part of this project.

E-Seals: This first test will use disposable container door seals that are also transponders (E-Seals) to track shipping containers as they move through ports and along roadways. ***Status:*** We have completed a contract and work plan with the consulting firm of TransCore to integrate E-seals with other freight databases in this region. Because TransCore is developing a U.S. Customs' oriented tag-based border crossing system for WSDOT, the contract includes the integration of the E-seal test with border activities. TransCore and the E-seal company (Electronic Seal Pte.) have developed a business agreement so that the two companies can work together.

Port Gates Congestion: This second test will use technology such as video cameras and the Internet to provide truckers with information designed to reduce congestion on roadways leading to port gates. ***Status:*** We are planning to install Web cameras at several port gates and have asked the City of Seattle and the Freight Mobility System Improvement Team of the Kent Chamber of Commerce to help identify promising locations. We are also working with the Port of Tacoma to develop an Internet-based system for truckers that can be used to determine container availability for pickup. The system will also be used to coordinate with the truckers the best (i.e., least congested) time of arrival at the gate.

Regional Freight Data: This test will link the many ITS in the region to collect freight data to support local and regional freight planning. ***Status:*** We have been working with staff at the University of Washington to develop a work plan for collecting and organizing freight data from the region's various ITS. This plan will link several existing freight data collection efforts. We are working closely with the Puget Sound Regional Council (an MPO) and its regional data programs.

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